REMARKS

Reconsideration is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. New claims 31 and 32 have been added. The new claims are supported by the original disclosure, for example page 6, lines 6-8. Claim 13 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer as the features recited therein are already present in claim 11. Claim 18 has been amended to correct the dependency thereof and claim 26 has been amended in view of the cancellation of claim 13. Claims 1, 3-12 and 14-32 are currently pending.

I. Interview

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the interview conducted on June 29, 2004 with the undersigned. During the interview, samples of paper made by the claimed method, along with a draft of a declaration regarding the preparation of the paper, were presented to the Examiner. The Jaisle and Moroff references used in the current rejections were also discussed. No agreement was reached concerning allowable claims or subject matter.

II. 35 USC 103(a) rejections

Claims 1, 3-18, and 19-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jaisle et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,473,613) in view of Moroff et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,853,594). In addition, claims 11-18 and 26-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jaisle et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,473,613). Applicants respectfully traverse both of these rejections.

Jaisle does not teach the use of an acrylate-containing dispersion or mixture (as recited in claim 1) or an acrylate (as recited in claim 11). Instead, Jaisle discloses the use of acrylic resin. Acrylate is defined as a salt or ester of acrylic acid, and acrylate resin is defined as an acrylic acid or ester polymer with a $-CH_2-CH(COOR)-$ structure. On the other hand, acrylic resin (disclosed by Jaisle) is a thermoplastic synthetic organic polymer made by polymerization of acrylic derivatives.

Jaisle does not teach the use of acrylate or the advantages derived therefrom. For example, the use of acrylate in the paper results in a paper that is more resistant to tearing while having a lower weight per unit area than conventional papers, which enables the paper to better handle the mechanical loads during production of tile using the paper and even allowing the impregnation speed during production of tiles using the paper to increase dramatically from 40-

60 m/min to 120 m/min, which is at least a doubling of the current speed while reducing the amounts of materials used (see, e.g., page 3, lines 20-30). Jaisle appears to rely on a separate reinforcing member for tear resistance (see, e.g., column 5, line 62 to column 6, line 3 of Jaisle).

Further, Jaisle does not explicitly disclose that the impregnated décor sheet has a weight within the range that is claimed. Jaisle discloses that the décor sheet can be a printed paper that has a basis weight of 16-160 g/m^2. This disclosed weight is the weight of the paper prior to impregnation with the acrylic resin. It is not the weight of the impregnated paper as claimed. The weight of the impregnated décor sheet is not disclosed by Jaisle, and the Examiner has not pointed to any disclosure in Jaisle that teaches that the weight of the impregnated décor sheet would have a weight falling within the claimed range.

Moroff does not remedy the deficiencies of Jaisle. Moroff is directed to the production of a decorative paper having a "highly glossy" surface. (Col. 1, ll. 8-10). Moroff teaches that unfilled decorative papers are "saturated" with the resin by dipping the papers in a trough of dispersion matrix. (Col. 3, ll. 5-9). The starting paper used under the process taught by Moroff has a weight of 200 to 220 g/m^2. (Col. 5, ll. 60-62; col. 6, ll. 63-67). Thus, Moroff also fails to teach the production of a paper having an impregnated paper weight of 15 grams to 60 grams per square meter.

The claims are therefore patentable over Jaisle and Jaisle in combination with Moroff.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Date: 8/17/04

Respectfully submitted,
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